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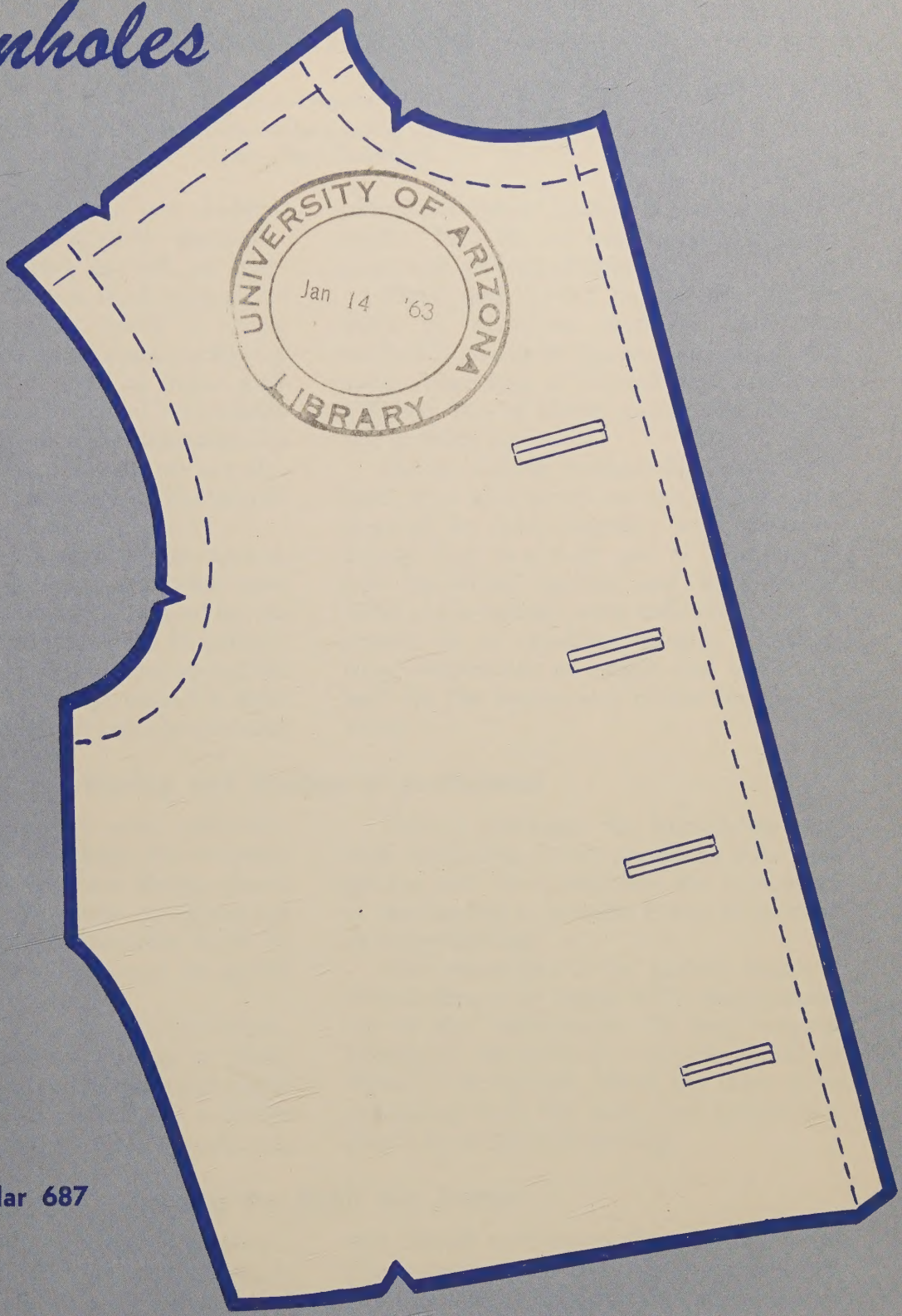
Piped and Corded Buttonholes



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Piped and Corded Buttonholes

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Buttons and buttonholes are popular closings on women's and girls' garments. They may be decorative as well as functional. Rarely is a button used without its buttonhole. The exception would be to use many buttons in groups or rows purely for decoration. Sleeves, pockets, or yokes may have buttons and nonfunctional buttonholes to simulate openings. In these instances the facings back of the buttonholes are not slit. The button is sewed to the end of the buttonhole and through the fabric.

Fabric buttonholes are either bound, piped, or corded. Bound buttonholes have the narrow seam allowances covered by the buttonhole piece. The seam may be pressed open so only one half of it is covered and the other half lies against the garment. Or, both edges may be covered. Bound buttonholes sometimes appear bulky—depending on the fabric. They are not used as extensively as piped and corded buttonholes.

Piped and corded buttonholes can be made by numerous methods. Only one method is shown in this circular, and it will make either type of buttonhole. Experience will help you to choose wisely and practice will improve your skill.

Before making buttonholes in any garment, it is wise to try out one or more on a piece of the fabric together with the interfacing. This is a sure way of determining how the fabric handles and what special skills are involved; what difficulties may be present as to raveling, turning, pressing; what proportions of length and width are best for the button and create the desired effect.

Placing and Spacing of Buttonholes

Fabric buttonholes are most frequently used for center front openings. For women's and girls' garments they are always placed on the right front. The same principles for marking and making buttonholes apply to center back openings. They may be placed on either right or left back.

The pattern design may call for buttonholes that are horizontal, vertical, or slantwise to the opening. Another variation might be long buttonholes on the front of a double breasted garment using a button at each end.

Pattern markings for buttonholes vary with companies. Study directions with each pattern and check each one for inaccuracy of spacing due to possible errors in printing or in perforating.

Any alterations in the pattern length to make it shorter or longer will require respacing of the buttonholes. To keep original spacing of the pattern a buttonhole may be added or eliminated. When the skirt opens continuous with the waist, the buttonholes should have the same spacing.

Choosing the Right Size Button

The pattern illustration, sketch, or photograph, is a guide for the right size button. It will have good proportions for the design and correct spacing on the pattern for the size suggested. To use a different size button than that planned for the pattern certain

factors must be considered:

- Large buttons are for large areas such as a big pocket or a full length opening. Wider spacing of the buttons is necessary; therefore, fewer may be used.
- Small buttons may be used in greater numbers and the spacing between may be narrow. They may be grouped or used to give a continuous line effect.
- The space between end of buttonhole mark and finished edge of opening should include half the button width plus $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch depending on size of button. The choice of a larger button requiring a longer buttonhole may make it necessary to extend the finished edge of the garment. The underlay of the left front should extend the length of the buttonhole beyond center front.

Rules for Planning Buttonholes

Determining the length

The size of a button and its shape determine the length of buttonhole and influence the spacing. A button size in inches is its diameter plus its height.

Determine as accurately as possible by measurement the length of buttonhole needed. Make a test buttonhole and try the button for size before making any in the garment.

Rules for evenness

Buttonholes must be an equal distance from the finished edge of the garment closing. You may work from the marked seam line if the facing is cut separately, from the fold line if facing is cut onto garment piece, or from the center front or center back marking.

Buttonholes must be an equal distance apart. When groups of them are used, the spaces within the group and between groups will be different but exactly repeated.

Buttonholes in any one area of the garment must be even in length and in width. Some designs use smaller buttons and buttonholes on sleeves than on front or back closing.

All buttonholes must have sharp corners and straight ends and sides. The piped or corded edges that form the buttonhole lips must be even in width.

Very narrow buttonholes are generally desirable for the most professional effect. Large buttons and heavier fabrics require slightly more width.

Accurate marking

All of the principles discussed here should be considered in the pattern before the garment is cut.

Fabric buttonholes have a more finished look when an interfacing is used. Transfer the pattern marks to the interfacing. Use tracing wheel and carbon to transfer center front, center back, or other marks on pattern denoting placement of buttonhole. Trace position and length of buttonhole.

Place interfacing against wrong side of garment piece. Pin in place and stay stitch the two together. See Figure 1.

Baste along the center line marked on the interfacing. Check for accuracy along straight of grain on garment. Fabrics that do not stitch mark may be machine basted. Use a fine thread and hand basting for sensitive fabrics.

Mark ends of buttonholes with machine or very fine hand basting. Use contrasting thread.

Make the first row of stitching 1/16 to 1/8 inch away from center line toward edge of garment opening. This extension allows the buttonhole to fit around the button shank when center fronts are lapped. See Figure 2.

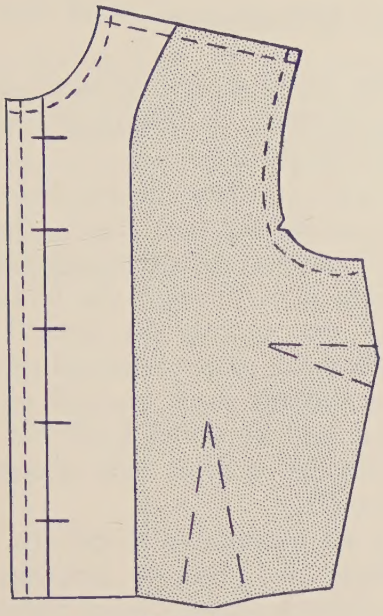

FIGURE 1

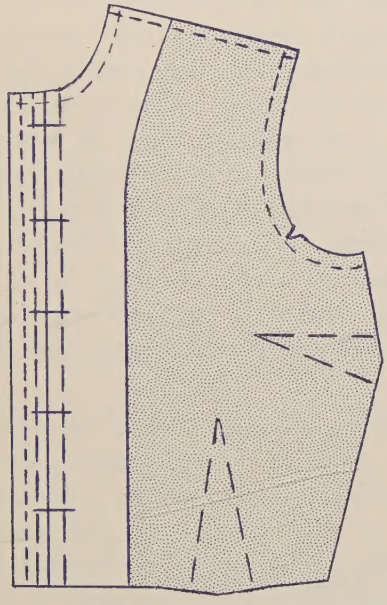

FIGURE 2

Measure from this stitching to mark the length of the buttonhole. Draw a line parallel to it. Machine or hand baste along the marked line.

Preparing the pieces

For piped buttonholes cut a strip lengthwise of fabric $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and twice the length of buttonhole. For corded buttonholes cut the strip on true bias.

For buttonholes in corduroy or twill fabrics, cut the strip on crosswise grain. It should match the garment grain when buttonholes are finished.

Placing the pieces

From wrong side pin through each line marking the position of a buttonhole. This is a temporary guide for placing buttonhole pieces of fabric on right side of garment. See Figure 3A.

With garment right side up, fold buttonhole piece along center lengthwise. Place fold against pin that marks the buttonhole position. See Figure 3B.

Hold in place and allow piece to unfold. Pin to garment across ends of piece. See Figure 3C.

Place and pin pieces for all buttonholes to garment. Then turn to wrong side for basting and stitching.

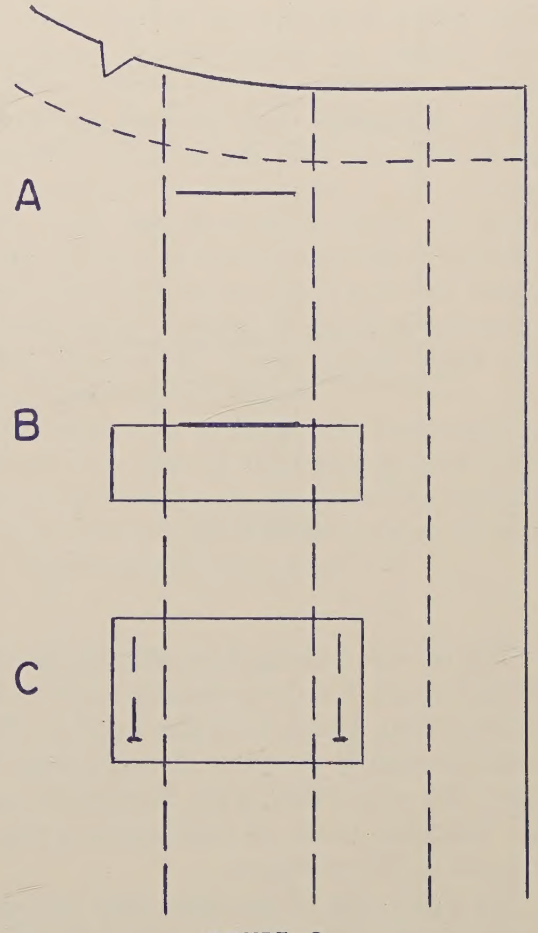

FIGURE 3

Steps in Making Piped or Corded Buttonholes

Remove pins marking position of buttonhole. Machine baste over this line starting and stopping at ends of buttonhole piece. Baste stitch parallel to the center line 3/16 inch away. Draw a line or use the presser foot as a guide. Repeat on other side of center line. See Figure 4A.

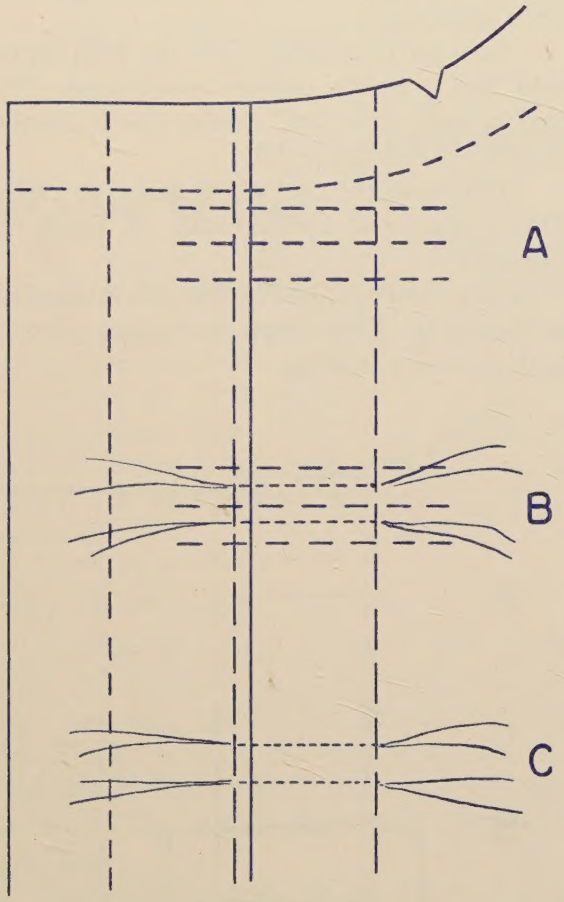

FIGURE 4

The outside basting lines should measure 3/8 inch apart for dress-weight fabrics, and not more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch for bulky fabrics. They should be exactly the same distance from the center line which marks the buttonhole position. Machine baste all buttonhole strips to garment in this manner:

On right side of garment fold one edge of strip over the basting toward center of buttonhole. Hold firmly in place for next stitching. If fabric is difficult to fold it may be pressed lightly or basted.

Now use matching thread and a short stitch—17 to 20 per inch. From interfacing side stitch halfway between center and outside basting lines through the folded piece. Start and stop exactly on vertical basting lines which mark ends of buttonholes.

Leave threads long enough to pull to wrong side and tie a firm knot. *Do not clip threads.* Repeat on other side of buttonhole. See Figure 4B.

When all buttonhole strips are stitched and threads tied, remove bastings which hold the strips in place. Do not remove basting at ends of buttonholes. See Figure 4C.

If bias strips have been used, draw a cord through the lips or tucks before cutting the buttonhole. Smallest cable cord about the size of wrapping twine is desirable. Cut a piece long enough for all buttonholes. Thread a needle with sewing thread and fasten to one end of cord by wrapping firmly and securing. Trim cord end close to thread. Push head of needle through lip of buttonhole tuck and pull cord through. Allow $\frac{1}{4}$ inch at each end for fastening. See Figure 5.

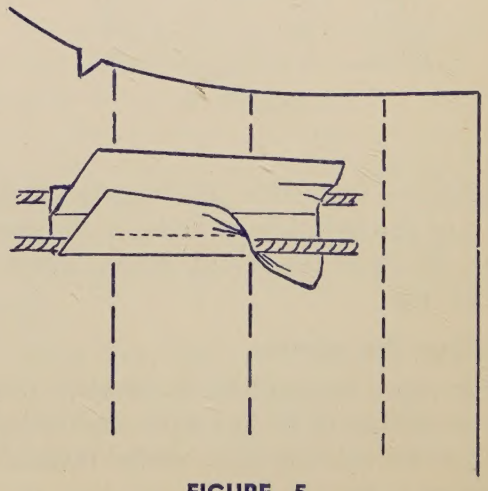

FIGURE 5

Cutting and finishing

From wrong side cut between lines of stitching to ¼ inch from each end of buttonhole. Clip diagonally to each corner. Use small, sharp-pointed scissors for clipping. Clip sharply to corners but do not cut machine basting on ends or stitching on sides of buttonhole. See Figure 6A.

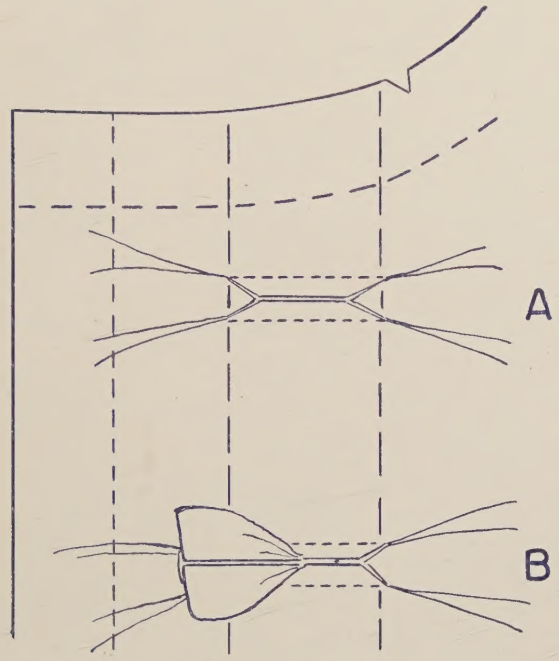

FIGURE 6

Gently turn buttonhole piece to wrong side. Crease sides and ends with fingers. Overcast lips of buttonhole together to prevent fullnes. See Figure 6B.

Place buttonhole piece next to feed dog of machine, fold garment piece back and stitch across triangle at ends of buttonholes. Hold threads taut while stitching as this helps to square the corners. The end stitching should cross the tied knots and end basting. See Figure 7.

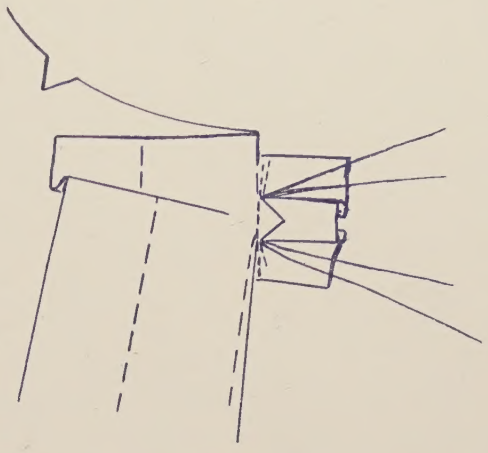

FIGURE 7

Trim buttonhole pieces to ¼ inch on ends and sides, cutting away threads at the same time. Press buttonholes from wrong side.

When facing has been attached pin it to garment at ends of each buttonhole. From right side stick a pin into the corners to mark position of buttonhole in the facing. Mark sides and ends with chalk. If fabric ravels stitch over marks with short machine stitch. This will form a rectangle the size of the buttonhole. Cut inside the rectangle same as for buttonhole. Turn under edges and whip to back of buttonhole.

Another way to finish the buttonhole is to mark the ends of the opening with pins, then cut the facing on the grain line between the pins. Turn edges under to form an oval and whip to buttonhole piece.

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